

Message Text

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43

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 NEA-11 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00

CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 DPW-01 IO-14 AID-20 DRC-01

(ISO) W

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O R 231142Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7382

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

RUMJRVWXAMEMBASSY RANGOON 637

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMCONSUL UDORN WTUY

USLO PEKING

USMISSION USUN

SECDEF

DIA

USIA WASHDC

CINCPAC

CINCUSARPAC

CINCPACAF

CDR USSAG NKP

CDR 13 AF ADVON UDORN

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USDAO SAIGON

COMUSMACTHAI
DODSPECREP BANKGOK
DODSPECREP NKP
354 TFW KORAT
CHSPECACTS BANGKOK
CDR JCRC NKP
7 ACCS KORAT
432 TFW UDORN
8 TFW UBON
56 SOW NKP
388 TFW KORAT

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 VIENTIANE 0567
CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD; 13 AF ADVON, 432 TFW, 56 SOW,
388 TFW, 354 TFW AND 8 TFW FOR DO/7\$8; MACTHAI FOR J-2
AND PAO

REF: VIENTIANE 0384

BEGIN SUMMARY: TWO LAO DELS TO JCCIA REGISTERED PROGRESS
AT NINTH PLENARY JANUARY 17 INITIALLING A DOCUMENT ON
SIZE, DUTIES, AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PROTECTIIVE MILITARY
BATTALIONS. AGREEMENNT UNCERTAIN AS YET ON CONTROL AND FUNCTIONNS
OF JOINT POLICE FORCE HOWEVER. PRIME MINISTER PREDICTED THAT
LPF WOULD REVEAL NAMES OF ITS MINISTERS IN THE NEW PROVISIONAL
GOVERNMENT (PGNU) THIS WEEK AND THAT PGNU WOULD BE ESTABLISHED
IN EARLY FEBRUARY. MILITARY ACTIVITY INCREASED SLIGHTLY
DURING THE WEEK, WHILE SOLDIER FROM THE LPF PROTECTIVE
BATTALION IN VIENTIANE CAME OVER TO RLG SIDE. FROM
JANUARY 13-16, NGUYEN HUU THO, CHAIRMAN OF NLF/PRG SVN
CENTRAL COMMITTEE PRESIDUM, VISITED THE LPF ZONE. MEAN-

WHILE, THE RUSSIAN AMBASSADOR AND OTHERS FROM HIS STAFF
ARE OFF TO SAM NEUA, APPARENTLY AT SOUVANNA'S BEHEST, TO
PROD RAPID FORMATION OF THE PGNU. DESPITE GOOD POLITICAL
NEWS, THE ECONOMIC SITUATION DECLINED WITH THE COST OF
LIVING SPURTING UPWARDS AND POL SHIPMENTS TO LAOS BEING
TEMPORARILY EMBARGOED BY THAI GOVERNMENT. END SUMMARY
I. IMPLEMENTING THE AGREEMENT

A. JOINT CENTRAL COMMISSION DEVELOPHENTS
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DURING ITS NINTH PLENARY SESSION AANUARY 17, THE
RLG AND LPF DELS TO THE JCCIA INITIALLED A DOCUMENT CON-
TAINING AGREED-UPON POINTS RELATING TO THE SIZE, DUTIES,
AND PREROGATIVES OF THE JOINT PROTECTIVE BATTALIONS (PMBS)
INVOLVED IN THE NEUTRALIZATION OF LUANG PRABANG
AND VIENTIANE IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLE 10 OF THE PROTOCOL.
SIZE OF EACH BATTALION WAS PEGGED AT 1,200 EACH IN
VIENTIANE, AND, IN LUANG PRABANG, EACH SIDE'S TWO-COMPANY

FORCE WILL NUMBER 600 MEN EACH. BROAD RANGE OF PMB RESPONSIBILITIES WAW ALSO AGREED UPON. BOTH DELS AGREED TO PROHIBIT MILITARY TRAINING WITHIN LIMITS OF TWIN CAPITALS.

LANE PATHAMMAVONG, THE RLG SPOKESMAN, IN A PRESS INTERVIEW JANUARY 21, STATED THAT THE SENIOR RLG OFFICIALS TO WHOM THE DRAFT AGREEMENT HAS BEEN SUBMITTED HAD PERCEIVED NO SERIOUS PROBLEMS, BUT THAT, PRIOR TO ITS FORMAL SIGNATURE BY THE TWO SIDES, IT WILL BE TABLED AT TODAY'S MEETING OF THE CABINET FOR APPROVAL. WHILE APPROVAL IS LIKELY, THE QUESTION OF REMOVING MILITARY BASES AND CAMPS FROM THE TWIN CAPITALS POSES BOTH FINANCIAL AND LOGISTICAL PROBLEMS FOR THE RLG.

COMMENT: AMBASSADOR WHITEHOUSE RAISED WITH ACTING DEFENSE MINISTER SISOUK AND RLG PLENIPOTENTIARY NEGOTIATOR PHENG PHONGSAVAN PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS OF PROVISION IN DOCUMENT CONCERNING PMBS, CALLING FOR WITHDRAWAL OF ALL RLG FORCES FROM AREA WITHIN 15 KILOMETERS OF VIENTIANE. AMBASSADOR EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT THIS WITHDRAWAL WOULD BE MOST COSTLY, GIVEN SIZE OF DEPOTS, MAINTENANCE SHOPS, ETC. ALREADY CONSTRUCTED WITH U.S. ASSISTANCE WITHIN THIS PERIMETER. BOTH LAO LEADERS ASSURED AMBASSADOR THAT UNDERSTANDING HAD BEEN REACHED WITH PATHET LAO PERMITTING SLOWLY PHASED WITHDRAWAL TO AVOID ANY LOGISTICAL OR HOUSEKEEPING PROBLEMS.

PHENG ALSO TOLD DCM, IN LATER CONVERSATION, THAT AGREEMENT HAD BEEN REACHED IN STRUGGLE BETWEEN PHEN AND RLG DEL CHIEF SOUKAN OVER CONTROL OF RLG POLICE CONTINGENT ON JPF. THIS CONTINGENT WILL BE "PLACED AT DISPOSAL OF JCCIA," BUT FOR ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT, PROMOTIONS, ETC., WILL REMAIN UNDER PHENG'S CONTROL AS MINISTER OF INTERIOR. APPARENTLY NO DECISION HAS BEEN MADE IN REGARD TO EXACT FUNCTIONS OF JPF, WHICH ARE ALSO AT ISSUE. PHENG'S
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FIRM STAND AGAINST TURNING BROAD POLICE JURISDICTION IN VIENTIANE OVER TO JPF AND AGAINST RELINQUISHING AUTHORITY OF MINISTRY OF INTERIOR FOR URBAN POLICE, IS BENEFICIAL TO USG AS WELL AS RLG SIDE. PHEN ALSO INDICATED THAT SOUKAN HAS ALIENATED SO MANY MEMBERS OF BOTH SIDES THROUGH HIS BOMBASTIC INCOMPETENCE THAT HIS

DAYS ARE NUMBERED AS CHAIRMAN OF RLG DEL.

B. RLG ACTIVITIES

1. RLGAF UNIT INSTALLED SEVERAL WEEKS AGO ON HILH GROUND OVERLOOKING LPF BIVOUAC AREAS IN LUANG PRABANG HAS REMAINED IN PLACE DESPITE PRIME MINISTER'S ORDERS THAT LOCAL MILITARY COMMANDER WITHDRAW TROOPS IN QUESTION. LPF PROPAGANDA MEDIA ARE COMPLAINING BITTERLY THAT THIS CONSTITUTES DELIBERATE PROVOCATIVE ACT. LPF DEL SPOKES-

MAN PHAO TOLD PRESS, AFTER JCCIA MEETING JANUARY 17, THAT "IF VIENTIANE GOVERNMENT SIDE CANNOT USE ITS AUTHORITY IN LUANG PRABANG TO HAVE TROOPS REMOVED, IT SHOULD CONFER SUCH AUTHORITY ON LPF--WHICH WOULD FIND MEANS TO SOLVE PROBLEM." THE LIGHT LPF GROUND PROBES, SEVERAL KILOMETERS FROM LUANG PRABANG OVER THE WEEKEND, WERE PERHAPS INTENDED TO UNDERSCORE PHAO'S THREAT. SOUVANNA SPENT WEEKEND IN LUANG PRABANG AND IS BELIEVED TO HAVE TAKEN PERSONAL HAND IN ISSUE.

2. DURING USIS DIRECTOR KEOGH'S CALL ON THE PRIME MINISTER IN LUANG PRABANG ON JANUARY 20, THE PRIME MINISTER STATED THAT HE EXPECTED THE COALITION GOVERNMENT TO BE FORMED IN EARLY FEBRUARY. HE ADDED THAT SOTH PHETRASY HAD TOLD HIM JANUARY 18 THAT PHOUN SIPRASEUTH WOULD RETURN FROM SAM NEUA LATER THIS WEEK BRINGING WITH HIM THE LIST OF LPF MINISTERS IN THE NEW GOVERNMENT.

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INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 NEA-11 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

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AMEMBASSY SAIGON
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
QAMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 110
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMCONSUL UDORN
USLO PEKING
USMISSION USUN
SECDEF
DIA
USIA WASHDC
CINCPAC
CINCUSARPAC

CINCPACAF
CDR USSAG NKP
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UMOSRA/CDR 13 AF ADVON UDORN
USDAO SAIGON
COMUSMACTHAI
DODSPECREP BANKLOK
DODSPECREP NKP
354 TFW KORAT
RHMFM TAWXCHSPEC ACTS BANGKOK
CDR JCRC NUG
7 ACCS KORAT
432 TFW UDORN
8 TFW UBON
56 SOW NKP
388 TFW KORAT

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 VIENTIANE 0567

3. NEUTRALIST PARTY NEWSPAPER SAY KANG HAS RECENTLY
BEGUN CARRING
CONSIDERABLE ANTI-AMERICAN PROPAGANDA.
THIS MATERIAL HAS INCLUDED AN ATTACK ON FORMER AMBASSADOR

TO LAOS GODLEY (WHICH WE PROTESTED QUIETLY TO PRIME MINISTER
WHO APOLOGIZED IN WRITING) AS WELL AS COMPLAINTS ABOUT VARIOUS
U.S. ODSSION AGENCIES OPERATING IN LAOS. NEWSPAPER HAS BEEN ALSO
PLAYING UP SOVIET AND NORTH VIETNAMESE PROPAGANDA STATEMENTS.

COMMENT: NEUTR-
ALIST PARTY REMAINS AN EMPTY SHELL, WITH
VIRTUALLY NO INFLUENCE OUTSIDE ITS NEWLYW REMODELLED HEAD-
QUARTERS OPPOSITE MORNING MARSET IN VIENTIANE. PRIME

MINISTER, ITS NOMINAL LEADER, TAKES NO INTEREST IN PARTY'S OPERATIONS OR ITS NEWSPAPER. WE SUSPECT THAT SOVIET EMBASSY PERSONNEL ARE ENCOURAGING NEWSPAPER'S SUDDEN EMERGENCE AS MOUTHPIECE FOR COMMUNIST COMMENTARY ON LAOS.

C. LPF ACTIVITIES

DISGRUNTLED LPF SOLDIER, WANDERING DOWN HIGH-WAY, FROM LPF PROTECTIVE MILITARY BATTALION, STATIONED AT BAN NANG THA IN VIENTIANE SUBURB, WAS PICKED UP
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BY FAR OFFICER AND PERSUADED TO RALLY. HE PROVIDED USEFUL INFORMATION AND IS NOW BEING EXPLOITED FOR INFO ON ORGANIZATION OF LPF FORCES IN VIENTIANE AREA. HE IS FIRST LPF DEFECTOR FROM UNITS BROUGHT INTO VIENTIANE.

ACCORDING TO COMMUNIST MEDIA SOURCES, NGUYEN HUU THO, CHAIR-MAN OF THE NLF/PRG CENTRAL COMMITTEE PRESIDENT PAID A VISIT TO THE LPF ZONE JANUARY 13-16. REPORTEDLY, THE DELEGATION MET WITH LPF LEADERS TO DISCUSS THE CURRENT SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM AND LAOS AND TO FURTHER STRENGTHEN RELATIONS BETWEEN THE VIETNAMESE AND LAO PEOPLES. ON JANUARY 15, PRINCE SOUPHANOUVONG AND TTD ISSUED A JOINT STATEMENT WHICH WAS GENERALLY STANDARD PROPAGANDA, EXCEPT FOR ITS REFERENCE TO THE ALLEGED ESTABLISHMENT IN MID-1973 OF LPF REPRESENTATION AT AN UNDESIGNATED SPOT IN SOUTH VIETNAM, AS WELL AS THE DESIGNATION OF A PRG REPRESENTATIVE TO THE LPF CENTRAL COMMITTEE. (COMMENT: WE HAVE NO REASON TO BELIEVE THAT SUCH REPRESENTATIVES WERE ACTUALLY NAMED PRIOR TO THEIR ANNOUNCEMENT DURING THE WEEK.) IN ADDITION, THE STATEMENT SAID THAT THE LPF, AS ONE OF THE SIGNATORIES TO THE VIENTIANE AGREEMENT, INSISTS THAT THE PGNU MUST FULLY "RECOGNIZE THE FACT THAT THERE ARE TWO ADMINISTRATIONS IN SOUTH VIETNAM, AS STIPULATED IN THE (VIETNAM) AGREEMENT." (COMMENT: THIS MAY IMPLY AN LPF PUSH FOR LAO RECOGNITION OF THE PRG AFTER THE PGNU IS FORMED.)

D. OTHER

SOVIET AMBASSADOR VDOVINE, DCM SHASHIKHINE, AND ASSISTANT MILITARY ATTACHE DVORNIKOV PROCEEDED TO

HANOI ENROUTE TO SAM NEUA ON JANUARY 19 TO HOLD DISCUSSIONS WITH LPF LEADERS. (49;835 -.- \$94'S TRIP IS IN FURTHERANCE OF REQUEST MADE BY SOUVANNA PHOUMA THAT HE VISIT SAM NEUA TO EMPHASIZE PRIME MINISTER'S DESIRE TO FORM NEW COALITION GOVERNMENT.

LOCAL PRESS REPORTED RLG HAS APPROVED RESUMPTION OF SOVIET AND CHINESE AIRLIFT OF SUPPLIES FOR
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LPF PERSONNEL IN VIENTIANE AND LUANG PRABANG BEGINNING JANUARY 15 Y GOVERNMENT STIPULATED THAT ONLY FOODSTUFFS AND CLOTHING COULD BE DELIVERED, NOT PERSONNEL OR MUNITIONS. IT WAS ALSO REPORTED THAT SOVIET AN-2 WILL COMMENCE REGULAR AIR SERVICE BETWEEN VIENTIANE, LUANG PRABANG, SAM NEUA AND LPF-HELD TOWNS OF MUONG SAI (JUNCTION OF CHINESE ROAD NET IN NORTHWEST LAOS) AND PHONGSAVAN AIRFIELD ON THE PLAIN OF AARFZ.

II. SECURITY SITUATION

THERE WAS AN INCREASE IN MILITARY ACTIVITY REPORTED DURING THE WEEK ENDING JANUARY 23, WITH NINE INCIDENTS TWOFOLD PLACE. FOUR OF THE INCIDENTS OCCURRED IN THE XXMUANG PRABANG AREA (MR-I), EAST AND SOUTHEAST OF THE CITY. FOUR INCIDENTS WERE REPORTED IN MR-III, 18-19 KMS SOUTH/SOUTHEAST OF MOUNG PHALANE. A FAR COMPANY RECEIVED MORTAR ATTACKS BY FIRE ON THREE SUCCESSIVE DAYS AND CLASHED WITH TWO ENEMY COMPANIES ON THE FOURTH DAY. ONE FAR SOLDIER WAS KILLED AND 525 WOUNDED IN THE GROUND ATTACK. RLAF LAUNCHED THREE T-28 STRIKES AGAINST SUSPECTED MORTAR POSITIONS WITH UNKNOWN RESULTS.

III. ECONOMIC SITUATION

USAID COST-OF-LIVING INDEX FOR VIENTIANE SHOWED A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE EARLY THIS WEEK, AND WAS 212.5

PERCENT ABOVE END-DECEMBER ON JANUARY 21. PRE-VIETNAMESE PUNEW YEAR'S BUYING MAY ACCOUNT FOR SOME OF THE INCREASE BUT HIGHER THAI PRICES AND TRANSPORTATION COSTS WERE REFLECTED IN THE RISE IN THE PRICE OF MEAT, EGGS AND POWDERED MILK. THE PRICE OF CIGARETTES ALSO ROSE. RICE PRICES REMAINED FAIRLY STABLE AND VEGETABLE PRICES SHOWED DECLINES.

ON JANUARY 17, THAI GOVERNMENT IMPOSED STRICT CONTROLS ON THE EXPORTS OF POL PRODUCTS. ALL EXPORTS OF POL PRODUCTS TO LAOS WERE TEMPORARILY BANNED PENDING

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OUT OF PROCEDURES FOR EXPORT LICENSING.
WITH SUPPLIES PRESENTLY I LAOS ESTIMATED TO LAST ABOUT
6 DAYS, IT IS HOPED THAT POL SUPPLIES, WHIHH WERE HELD

UP AT THE BORDER, WILL BE PROMPTLY RELEASED.

FEOF SALES OF FOREIGN EXCHANGE CONTINUED LOW LAST
WEEK AND TOTAL SALES WERE SUBSTANTIALLY BELOW THE AVERAGE
OF RECENT WEEKS.
WHITEHOUSE

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